

Introduction: This magazine article tells interesting facts about pumpkins and talks about different ways to cook and eat them.



PUMPKINS

Not Just Another Pretty Face

This year carve those fresh pumpkins for your table.

By Elizabeth Field

Pumpkins are as much a part of autumn as blazing scarlet foliage and fresh-pressed apple cider.

5 This colorful vegetable, a member of the winter squash family, can add spice to many fall meals. Paired with sweet or zesty seasonings in soups, sauces, puddings, and savory side dishes, and even preserves, 10 cubed or pureed pumpkin is delicious and surprisingly low in calories, too. When pumpkin shells are cleaned and hollowed out, they make great decorative containers for coups, 15 casseroles, or dips. And pumpkin seeds when lightly roasted are a nutritious, nutlike snack that can be hard to resist.

20 Pumpkins are grown in two main varieties, sugar and field. Sugar pumpkins are usually about seven inches in diameter and weigh about six to 10 pounds. Field pumpkins are about 12 inches and up in diameter 25 and usually weigh from 15 to 90

pounds. (The field pumpkin holds the world's record weighed 493.5 pounds!) Either type may be used for cooking (as long as it is fully ripe and has a firm rind); however, smaller 30 pumpkins have a sweeter, finer texture and more flavorful flesh.

Most recipes use fresh pumpkin either cooked and mashed (pureed) or raw and cubed. (One 35 pound raw pumpkin yields $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 cup cooked, mashed pumpkin and about 1-1/3 cups cubed pumpkin) There is not a true substitute for raw pumpkin, 40 as it has distinctive taste and texture; however canned pumpkin puree may be used in the place of cooked, mashed pumpkin.

45 To make fresh pumpkin puree, wash and cut the vegetable in half cross wise. Remove seeds and strings. Place in a shallow pan, cut side down, and bake at 325° for 1 hour or until very tender. Scrape pulp 50 from the shell and put through a

strainer or food mill. Then place in a strainer that has been lined with a paper towel and let drain for 30 minutes to remove excess liquid.

55 Cooked, mashed pumpkin will keep, refrigerated, for 36 hours. Or it can be frozen for later use.

To make roasted pumpkin seeds (or *pepitas*), place washed seed 60 on a cookie sheet in a thin, even layer. Roast at 375° for about 20 to 30 minutes or until crisp and brown, stirring often. For flavor variety, toss the seeds with salt garlic, or chili 65 powder.

Finally, don't hesitate to be inventive. Fresh pumpkins can be added to stews, steamed and served with butter and nutmeg, baked with 70 cinnamon and honey or cubed, parboiled, and batter-fried. The following recipes are just a few of the many ways to enjoy this versatile vegetable.

To conclude her article Elizabeth field gives recipes for Curry Pumpkin Soup, Baked Pumpkin with Ginger, Steamed Pumpkin Custard, Pork with Pumpkin Sauce, Pumpkin au Gratin, and Pumpkin in Apricot Butter

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PREREADING ACTIVITY:

Bring a fresh pumpkin to school. Cut off the top and scope out the inside so that the students can see what is inside. Show them the pulp and the seeds. You can talk about the vocabulary words that pertain to the pumpkin such as pulp, seeds and strings. Explain that you will take the seeds home and prepare pepitas for them.

Next have the students carve the pumpkin for a Halloween Jack-o-Lantern.

READER'S GUIDE:

Activity I. Please find proof in the text that the following statements are true.

1. Pumpkins are harvested (taken from the fields where they grow) in the fall. P ____ Line(s) ____
2. Pumpkins can be cooked and eaten in many different ways. P ____ Line(s) ____
3. There are two types of pumpkins grown. P ____ Line(s) ____
4. Smaller pumpkins are better to eat than larger pumpkins. P ____ Line(s) ____
5. Fresh pumpkin tastes better than canned pumpkins. P ____ Line(s) ____
6. It takes less than an hour to roast pumpkin seeds. P ____ Line(s) ____

Activity II. Please find proof in the text that the following statements are false.

1. Pumpkins are best eaten in August. P ____ Line(s) ____
2. Pumpkins make you fat. P ____ Line(s) ____
3. Most people do not like to eat roasted pumpkin seeds. P ____ Line(s) ____
4. Field pumpkins are usually smaller than sugar pumpkins. P ____ Line(s) ____
5. Canned pumpkin has a better taste and texture than fresh pumpkin. P ____ Line(s) ____
6. You must boil fresh pumpkins to make a puree. P ____ Line(s) ____

Activity III Vocabulary. Complete the following exercises.

1. The words "shell" (P 2, Line 12) and "rind" (P 3, Line 30) describe the outside of a pumpkin. Please find words used in the text to describe the inside of a pumpkin.
 - a. P 2, Line 16 _____
 - b. P 3, Line 32 _____
 - c. P 5, Line 47 _____
 - d. P 5, Line 49 _____
2. The words given below describe different characteristics or qualities of a pumpkin. Please select the best answer for each item. Don't forget the context (where and how the word is used).
 - a. P3, L31-32 Fine(r) texture appeals to your sense of
a. hearing

- b.touch
- b. P 5, L49 Tender = soft and easy to
- a.walk and run
- b.chew and eat
- c. come and go
- d.arrive and leave
- c. P 6, L 62 crisp
- a.firm and dry
- b.red and green
- c. blue and yellow
- d.black and white
3. Synonyms are words (or expressions) which have the same meaning or nearly the same meaning. Below are words not found in the text. Please find their synonyms in the text.
- Ex: _____ = cut/slice
- a. P1 _____ = recently made
- b. P2 _____ = combined with, mixed with
- c. P2 _____ = cut into small cubes ()
- d. P2 _____ = mashed
- e. P2 _____ = emptied
- f. P2 _____ = bowls (n)
- g. P3 _____ = types (n)
- h. P4 _____ = uncooked
- i. P4 _____ = gives, makes
- j. P4 _____ = special, unique characteristic
4. Antonyms are two words (or expressions) which have an opposite or different meaning. Below are words not found in the text. Please find their antonyms in the text.
- a. P5 _____ ≠ lengthwise
- b. P5 _____ ≠put back, replace
- c. P5 _____ ≠ deep
- d. P5 _____ ≠ tough
- e. P5 _____ ≠not enough
- f. P6 _____ ≠ thick
- g. P6 _____ ≠ precisely, exactly
- h. P7 _____ ≠subtracted from
- i. P7 _____ ≠ preceding

Activity IV. You may use a dictionary to do this exercise, or you may prefer to make educated guesses. Please cite directly from the text the words that have the same meaning as the phrases given below.

1. P1 "bright red leaves" _____
2. P2 "flavorful spices" _____
3. P2 "tasty food served along with the main course" _____
4. P3 "completely grown, ready to be harvested and used as food" _____
5. P5 "allow to drip dry for half an hour" _____

6. P5 "stored in a refrigerator for a day and a half" _____
7. P6 "for a different taste, mix" _____
8. P7 "cooked in the vapors of a boiling liquid" _____
9. P7 "cooked in an oven" _____
10. P7 "boiled until partly cooked" _____
11. P7 "coated with a mixture of flour, milk, eggs, etc. then cooked in hot oil" _____

Activity V. Cloze Exercise. The following paragraph is a brief summary of the text. Fill in the blanks with the words given below. Please use each word only once.

Autumn
batter-friend
cooked
decorative

delicious
fresh
pepitas
pureed

variety
winter

(1)_____ is the season to enjoy pumpkins for their (2)_____ beauty as well as their (3)_____ flavor. A versatile member of the (4)_____ squash family, pumpkins may be (5)_____ and eaten in a (6)_____ of ways. Some recipes call for (7)_____ cubed pumpkin. Even the seeds of pumpkins may be roasted and eaten as a zesty snack called (8)_____. Remember that pumpkins may be steamed, baked, or even parboiled and (9)_____.

Activity VI. Interpretations. Complete the following exercises.

1. Show how the text leads us to assume that:
 - a. Large pumpkins are probably tough and not too tasty.
 - i. P____ L_____
 - b. Pumpkins probably contain a high percentage of H₂O.
 - i. P____ L_____
2. P1, L2. Select the definition which best applies to "blazing" in this text. Webster defines the verb blaze as:
 - a. to burn rapidly or brightly
 - b. to give off a strong, vivid light; to shine brightly
 - c. to be deeply stirred or excited (as with anger)
3. P5, L46-48 "Cut side down" probably refers to the:
 - a. pan
 - b. pumpkin
 - c. cook
 - d. oven
4. Consider the title "Not Just Another Pretty Face." Give some probable reason(s) why the author chose it.
5. Elizabeth Field refers to the pumpkins as a "colorful vegetable" and a "versatile vegetable." Read the following definitions from Webster, then decide if Field is correct or incorrect when she calls a pumpkin a "vegetable" instead of a "fruit."
 - a. Pumpkin: a large, round orange- yellow, gourdlike "fruit" with many seeds; (British) any of several varieties of squash.
 - b. Squash: a fleshy fruit of any of various plants of the gourd family, eaten as a vegetable.

